0:00:00.0
(This is a sound check. I want to make sure that you're picking everything up here. So why don't you go ahead and say something so I can hear your voice.)

OK, I'm Larry Sanders, Wildlife Services.

(OK. This is Diana Dwyer and I'm interviewing Larry Sanders, Wildlife Services. It's September 28, Thursday. I'm in Craig, Colorado. [pause] I was just gonna go through the biographical thing. It said that you were born in Oklahoma when you filled out the thing.)

Yes.

(How did you end up in Colorado?)

I came here for the hunting…

(Yeah?)

Elk and deer hunting, back when I was a young man. With all the public land to hunt on, it was a real plus, so here we are.

(Definitely. So I you lived in Mancos first?)

Yes.

(And then you moved up here?)

We made several—we moved to Pagosa Springs once, from there to Missouri, from Missouri back to Oklahoma, and then Oklahoma to Mancos. We've been up and back a time or two. But then at Mancos, I was there for a while doing carpentry work and house painting. I've always hunted coyotes, and I got acquainted with a rancher there that had some coyote depredation, and he asked if I could maybe help him, so I did. I went and killed some coyotes, and then in—that was in '79. Then in '80, they started the program up again here, Jim Worthen came up here to be state director, and this rancher told me that there were doing that, so I sent an application in, and with that rancher's recommendation, Worthen hired me.

0:01:44.1
(Cool. And you hunted and fished when you were younger. Did you trap when you were younger, too?)

Not so much growing up, not fur trap or with steel traps. I had rabbit traps, bird traps as a kid growin' up, I did all that. Prior to havin' this job, I had got into bird trapping some.

(Did your father teach you, an uncle or anything?)

No, actually pretty much self-taught, I guess. I read everything I could get my hands on, but I had no family members that hunted. I'm the only black sheep, I guess.

(Oh, that's unusual. [laughs])

Yeah. My brother, he golfs.

([laughs] That's quite a different lifestyle.)

Exactly.

0:02:31.0
(So you started out in 1980 with Wildlife Services?)

Yes.

(Was the majority of the work trapping or was it mainly—I don't know if you got into aerial gunning? Or was it…)

I didn't. I tried the aerial gunning, but I had motion sickness and I couldn't do it, couldn't handle it. So—and even today, I'm the ground crew when we aerial hunt. When I first started, it was traps and snares and some calling and shooting. Of course, all that's changed over the years with the passage of Amendment 14.

(You can't do much in Colorado any more.)

There's very little you can do. I still run my snare line every spring on the lambing grounds, but for 30 days. That's not enough. Anyway, our job has changed from trapping and snaring equipment use, it's changed to a little more of calling and decoy dog use.

(Do you use toxicants at all, M44s?)

Occasionally, yeah. Mm-hmm.

(What about your snares, when you put them out, what kind of lures do you use?)

Particularly on the snares, I don't use any lures. I just have sets under fences, for the coyotes coming under the fence, with no lure attractant at all, just a snare, a blind set thing.

0:03:51.5
(Have you had—you're using coyotes. Is there anything else out here that you ever get phone calls on?)

Oh, bear and mountain lion.

(Mountain lion?)

Mm-hmm.

(We had a mountain lion by the Research Center recently.)

I've been getting emails about all the stuff in, like, Glenwood Springs and all around there.

(There's a lot of young cats, it seems like.)

That's what it looks to me like.

(Is that—you get a phone call from a rancher and they'll say, "I've got a problem", directly?)

Yes. [pause] For whatever—they don't always know what killed it, they suspect it was a lion or a bear or a coyote, but they call me and I investigate and see what needs to be done.

0:04:32.6
(Do you pretty much have to—is it all year long problems?)

No—well, it is to a certain degree. The main problems—the biggest problem we have is during the lambing time, which starts probably late April and we have trouble—coyotes are killin' lambs somewhere in my district from late April till they put 'em on the truck in the fall and get 'em out of here. Our program here, there's three of us here, three full-time positions. Used to be five, but with the—it gets expensive with the cost increases we've had. By having only three guys, our districts are really too large. You just do the best you can, hit the high spots, and you don't really have the opportunity to go in and really clean up a mess of coyotes. You do just enough to stop depredation because you've got five other places you need to go to. And as a result of that, sometimes when they come back through, those same coyotes'll start hittin' again.

Anyway, it's—the depredation of the lambs doesn't stop until they get 'em on the truck.

(I'm gonna close the door because I'm picking up your wind chimes. [pause] I talked to somebody that did interviews with a lady in another project, and she had parakeets [laughs]

[laughs]

And they kept picking up parakeets everywhere on the recording. [laughs] So pretty much it's lamb predation?)

0:06:08.1
That's the biggest part of the predation. Then in the wintertime, in this part of the country, coyotes kill adult sheep in the winter out on the desert. And that, we usually handle that with an airplane. In the winter we're workin' the airplane anyway, and we take care of that usually that way.

(What about bear? Are they coming into ranches?)

Most of the bear—in the summertime in this country, most of the sheep go to Forest Service grazing, Forest land grazing permits. That's where most of the bear problems are. Some of the ranchers have some high-country private land, and they have bear trouble on their private land as well. The private land bear trouble, if we haven't already used the 30-day exemption, we can do that and set a foot snare for a bear or a lion. Forest Service, there's nothin' we can do with

equipment after Amendment 14, so our only option is to get a hound man. We have a couple of good ones we get up here and try to catch the bear.

(That's what they were doing in California. They're worried about the cougar issue right now without a management plan going out there. They're worried about that. The guy that used the hounds, I'd never talked to someone before who'd done that. He had 11 dogs. But you hire someone to come in and do that?)

No, our hound guy works for Wildlife Services.

(Oh, ok.)

He's an employee of Wildlife Services. He just doesn't have a district to work coyotes in, like we do. He travels around with his hounds. But yes, he works for Wildlife Services.

0:07:48.2
(I didn't realize that. I'll have to look into it. I know it's changed a lot since the 1980s when you first started. What do you see as the biggest difference? I know that trap laws caused a lot of problems. What do you think is the biggest difference between when you first started and now?)

Well, aside from not being able to trap, aside from that, I think two things, probably. One is the use of guard dogs, and the other is hunting, deer and elk hunting. All the ranches, they have their ranch leased to an outfitter, and that's a big business now. It's a big part of their income, and they don't want us on there messing around during the hunting season. So that has slowed things down a little bit in the latter part of the fall season. But the guard dog use, I have accepted a lot better than some of the guys, but it definitely affects how well we can take coyotes, because when you howl to locate coyotes, the guard dog starts barkin' to you and coyotes don't bark then, and when coyotes that are living near a herd of sheep with guard dogs—guard dogs being a bigger predator in their eyes, when you're trying to call 'em, they're a little more sly about coming in. They've gone running in and found a guard there a time or two and he got after them, so they are a little more apt to circle downwind of you, and in the brushy country, that makes it very difficult.

0:09:29.0
(Have you had any coyotes that you've been trying to get that you really had a hard time getting this one particular coyote?)

I've had some that I never got. [laughs]

([laughs])

I don't think a guy can get every coyote out there. Some of 'em that get really smart, they're very, very difficult. One of the ranches I work on, they've decided to handle their own hunting, and instead of having it leased to an outfitter, they hired a guy to be their outfitter. He's a nice young man, and he thinks he's helping. He loves to call coyotes, so he's been trying to call coyotes on that ranch. And he's killed a few, probably, but he has educated so many coyotes that I had a very difficult time this year, and there's some of 'em I never got. And they had a lot higher lamb losses than they should have had because of that. But he doesn't understand it and

neither does the rancher. Most ranchers think the more people you can get out there huntin' coyotes, the better off you are.

(But they just get really aware of the people out there and they're not gonna move?)

They get—yeah. If they move—if they come at all, they'll come way around you, out of range, smell you, and leave, and in that brushy country, you never even know they were there.

0:10:44.0
(What about fox or anything like that, have you had any problems with them?)

Very seldom, but we do have some—when lambs are really small, early on, a fox can kill 'em. When we're running the airplane, we take care of foxes as well as coyotes, on lambing grounds.

(How difficult is it? I've always been told it's difficult to track lions. I didn't know if that—I guess if you have lion dogs, trained dogs?)

Yeah, you've got to have some really good dogs, because the time of year that lions are the biggest problem is when it's dry, no snow on the ground, and it takes a very good dog to trail a lion in dry conditions. Dry-ground dogs, they call 'em. Most of the lion hunters hunt in the winter when they're on snow, and that's a different ball game. But yeah, it's very difficult for the dogs to trail a lion. That's the only way now that we can take a lion that's effective. I've tried calling a time or two, a lion, but have not been successful. You've got to be—they've got to hear you. They cover such a large area, and with hounds you can put a hound on the trail where they kill. [pause] If they're good, they'll put 'em up a tree.

(Yeah, if they can find them. Have you done any work with the Research Center, some people have, on projects?)

When I first started, in 1980, they were still doing what they were calling a scent survey.

(I've seen the reports.)

Where we brushed a three-foot circle and had a little scent capsule and determined what critters had been there during the night, we'd check it every day for a week, had to keep a record and all that. Did that for one year and then they—I guess they discontinued it after that. One or two years, I think just one. One year here and then two years in Steamboat. When I first went to work here, I was at Mancos, so I had that—west of Mancos, they had a scent line there, and then over at Steamboat, I think I did that one two years, and then I guess that was the end of their project.

0:13:02.7
I haven't actually—other than that, the only thing I've actually worked with the research department, I had some ideas that through my state director, Craig Coolahan, at the time, sent to the research department and then I communicated some with Stewart Breck. It's been on the breakaway snare with the telemetry device.

(Yeah, he's been doing a lot of work on that.)

Yeah. That was one of my ideas to help us on bear, in the forest. They did a lot of research on that, and I'm a little disappointed that it didn't pan out the way they wanted to for bear. They are usin' it, I hear, though, on wolves.

(Wolves.)

And I talked to Stewart several times, and several things they're doing, it sounds like it's working pretty good for them on the wolves. I'm not sure, I think they tested that in Oregon, maybe Nolte—

(Dale Nolte.)

Dale Nolte, I think, but I'm not certain. I think he was probably trying to catch bears that were doing damage to timber. That would be a lot more difficult, to catch a bear like that, then it would—our use—what I had in mind for it here in Colorado, I'm confident that I could catch a bear in a breakaway snare, because I've got a bear that has killed a lamb or a ewe, and he's comin' back that next night to eat 'em. I used to catch 'em all the time in a foot snare, and I can catch 'em in a neck snare as well and have that device on his neck. Whether or not they'll allow us to do that in Colorado with Amendment 14, I don't know. Someone might have to make that determination, because it's not—it's still a snare, but it's not a capture device any more.

0:14:55.3
(What exactly does Amendment 14 say you can and can't do?)

You know, I'm not certain of the wording on it, but I know we can't use traps or snares as capture devices in the forest or anywhere outside of a 30-day exemption on private land. So the way I look at it, that wouldn't be a capture device, that's a radio tagging device.

(I was gonna say, like it could be for research, like putting—they still catch them and put collars on 'em, don't they? Or a radio [can't understand word band? I don't know how they catch 'em.)

I think, yeah, for certain research projects you can get sort of an exemption to do whatever you need to do. But for just damage control, for livestock, it's not—I don't—you can't get an exemption for that, because that's what we did all the time. We didn't catch a bear unless he was killin' livestock. So then we'd try to do that. The thing is, if some judge had to rule on whether or not that was in compliance, he might rule against us on that, because the end result of that bear is gonna be the same. He's gonna die.

(Moving him's not gonna do any good?)

No. Before, if I could use a foot snare, I'd catch him in a foot snare, I'd go check the snare, there's the bear, and we—that's our policy. The bear dies. If I put a radio collar transmitter on a neck snare, a breakaway snare, and he leaves with that, I'm gonna find him with a signal and I'm still gonna kill him. So if their intent of that was that no bears be killed, then we couldn't do that either.

(If you were just tracking for research or something—)

That would be different. So maybe it wouldn't work for us anyway, but that was my original thinking, and Coolahan thought it was a good idea, so he passed it along to Shivik, I think, and he started it and then—

(And John and Stewart works for him?)

Yeah. And then now Stewart—last time I talked to him Stewart's pretty much taken the ball and gone with that.

0:17:03.4
(Yeah, he's doing some amazing things. He's working with—in Yosemite with bears that break into cars, working on scare devices and they're trying—and also with the wolves in Idaho, they're trying to use scare devices around lambing and also livestock pens, that kind of area. They're trying all kinds of things. They said if they can—all these electronic toys that are out for kids, there surely must be some way we can use that same technology out in the wild.

Mm-hmm.

(It sounds like some of your stuff's been kind of challenging. You've had to outthink coyotes, plot your way through how you're gonna catch something. What do you find most challenging about what your work is?)

As far as the species, coyotes would be the most challenging for me. Trying to take enough coyotes out to stop depredation without the use of equipment has been very challenging. As a result, most of us now have some decoy dogs that are pretty good. We've bred for that, selected traits, you know, and now we have some pretty good decoy dogs. I'd love to have traps and snares back, but the decoy dogs are working pretty good.

(What kind of dogs are they?)

Mountain curs is what I use, that's what most of the guys here use.

(I've never seen one.)

I'll show you some in a little while. [laughs]

([laughs])

I've got five new puppies down there.

(Oh, you're kidding, I'm glad my husband's not with me! [laughs])

He'd want to take one back?

(I've got a little schnauzer, and he wants to get a real dog.)

Well, he would like one of these.

(Yeah, I bet he would. When I was in Texas, they were talking about the houndsmen. They were people who apparently run packs of hounds, and they had a lot of problems with them destroying their trap lines or stealing their traps because they didn't—they were cutting fences and letting the dogs run across private land, even though the somebody had asked them to—the guy—the specialty man had put some trap lines down. It became really confrontational. Have you ever had to deal with anything like that?)

0:19:16.6
Well, I have, actually. In 1988, I transferred from Mancos to Oklahoma and worked there till 1991, when I came back here. And while in Oklahoma, I was in western Oklahoma, in Frederick, and there were a lot of those guys there that ran the sight dogs, is what they were—

(Is that what they call them?)

Yeah, they're greyhounds or stag hound mixed, crossbreeds. And they did just like you were saying, they just cut a fence or bust through it with a truck. They've got big grill bars on the front, and they just bust through one after a coyote. And anyway, there were a lot of coyotes in that county, and there was a sportsmen's group there that wanted to raise pheasants and release 'em, try to get a pheasant population started. Well, they weren't havin' much luck, so there realized they need to get rid of a few predators to ever get the pheasants started, so they contacted the—back then it was called ADC, but anyway, they started a new program there, and I had had an application in to go back to Oklahoma, because my parents were gettin' old and I wanted to get back down there. Anyway, I got that job, and there were so many coyotes there, and the coyotes in that particular area were real easy to catch.

([laughs])

These up here are a lot tougher to catch. I don't know what the difference is. I think down there they were a little bit more of a scavenger-type coyote than what we've got here. There's a lot of different sub-species of coyotes anyway.

0:20:54.8
I went down there and I ran a lot of M44's and for three winters in a row, I killed over 300 coyotes a year, just on that. And then a few more the rest of the year, but well over 300 a year for three years. Well, all those guys that were—I heard through the grapevine they were complaining, they at one time within five miles of town they could have their dogs wore out from chasin' coyotes, there were so many coyotes. They didn't have to drive very far. By then they were havin' to really drive and look and hunt and they weren't very pleased with me for killin' all those coyotes. Through the grapevine there was threats they were gonna do all kinds of things, burn my house, catch me out somewhere.

(Sounds like the stuff they [can't understand rest of sentence.)

Exactly, same thing. I had a guy that claimed to be my friend, I don't know how much of a friend he was, but he would tell them what I said and tell me what they said, back and forth, you know. They were—their plan—you know, they said they were gonna—any traps of mine they were gonna take on and one old boy was gonna catch me out somewhere and whip my butt and all that. But I told him, so that he would tell them, I knew he would, I told him that those traps,

that's federal property. If they steal some of those traps or any of my equipment, there'll be a U.S. marshal down here in a heartbeat to investigate, and I don't think they want that.

0:22:33.6
(Most of them probably have records to begin with.)

Yeah, a lot of 'em do. And I said, "As far as jumpin' on me and whippin' my ass, if they want to start that, they'd better really be dedicated, because one of 'em is gonna die. I've got a gun, and I'm not gonna take a whipping." So I never really had any trouble with them.

(Just threats?)

Yeah. I—they just didn't like me because I killed the coyotes. But I was just doing my jobs. The sportsmen, the ones that were raising the pheasants, they were very pleased. [laughs]

([laughs] Somebody—one of the gentlemen from Oklahoma, I think it was James Pitts, said that at one point in his career down there he had the keys to over a thousand ranches, because the way he worked with the ranchers, they'd just call up and say, "I've got a problem," and he'd head out and they'd be out there usually working, you know, on the field, so he'd just show up and go out and get a horse if he needed one, go out and ride it. Is that more of the old-time way of trapping now? You don't work that way anymore, probably?)

0:23:46.6
Well, I did some in Oklahoma like that, like you're talking about.

(It's a different kind of—different, how is Oklahoma different from Colorado? I guess that's it.)

Well, Oklahoma for the most part down there, the sheep weren't what they called migratory bands of sheep. They didn't go from the winter range lambing ground, high country grazing, and back again. They just stayed on the ranch. And it was a little different because right there on the ranch, you could kill the coyotes that were on the ranch and adjoining the ranch and for the most part be done with that for the year. Where up here, the same number of sheep, they're here for the while, and then they move into a new bunch of coyotes and you're busy there, and then they move into a third bunch up in the high country. So fewer sheep here keep you busier than it did down there.

(You moved with the sheep? Your wife said when you guys were younger, you used to go out all summer long?)

Yes, yeah. When all the sheep—I do it the same way now, except she's been working all these years and hasn't gone with me much. This last summer she retired and goes with me some and will more next year. But when they leave the lambing grounds and go to the grazing permits on the forest, I pull my camp, the one you saw right out there, I pull that up and set it up and I camp up there all summer. From a central location, my summer district is what I call it. So I work on all the grazing permits, wherever I'm needed up there, try to stay ahead of the sheep if I can and kill few coyotes before they get into there.

0:25:37.6

(You must see some beautiful country.)

Beautiful country. I love to ride horses.

([chuckles] That was my next question: Do you take horses with you?)

I do, yeah. In the summer, every day I work on horseback. My district is one that you can't work from a truck or a four-wheeler. It's all horseback.

(I'm sure it's a lot of work, but it sounds wonderful. [chuckles])

It is wonderful. It's the kind of thing I'd do if I didn't have to work. Only I'm gettin' paid for it.

(It's amazing. I was gonna ask you about the guard dogs and other guard animals. Do you think they work? Do you think they work at all?)

You know, guard dogs I think work to some degree. I've never seen llamas or donkeys or anything else that I felt like was actually working. Some guard dogs don't work at all, but some are pretty good. And in different parts of the country, you may have to have more guard dogs with a herd of sheep to actually do some good because of the aggressiveness of the coyotes. In this country here, from five to seven guard dogs with a herd of sheep is really what you need. Two guard dogs may or may not do it, usually not. Coyotes seem to have figured out—I don't know if they do it on purpose or whether it just happens, but when they—I've seen it several times, heard it and actually once watched with binoculars, but one coyote will howl or start barking, and however many guard dogs is in the bunch [chuckles] all run to that coyote barking to chase it off. He yelps and yaps at 'em, lures 'em further and further from the herd, and then the other coyote—it's usually the male that calls 'em away, and the female goes in and kills a lamb. I've seen that happen—I've heard where it's happening, seen tracks and evidence, and then one day I watched it all happen and we had the airplane out. This wasn't lambs, this was adult sheep out on the winter range. I pulled up to a spot to have, to try to locate for the airplane, and I stepped out of my truck and I heard a coyote barkin' over there.

0:27:49.1
So I got to watchin'. He was yappin' and the guard dogs were goin' to him, and I watched as he just teased 'em, got 'em further and further, so I called the airplane n told 'em, and the direction they were comin' from, they had to come right across the other edge of the sheep, they were spread out pretty good. I said, "The coyotes is on the north side of the sheep up here and the guard dogs are nearby." They said, "We'll swing around the south side and come around and take your line." They come—you know how they do that?

(I'm not sure, why don't you explain it?)

OK. When I howl coyotes up, I point my truck right to where they are, and the airplane comes around and he flies right straight over my truck.

(I didn't know that.)

And he goes right straight out, and I can watch and I can tell him on the radio, "OK, a little bit to your left, a little more, right there," you know, and I'll guide him right over the coyotes.

(I had no idea how it worked.)

And they're watching, they'll say, "OK, we've got 'em spotted," and then they'll go to work. Well, they were gonna come around and take my line. Well, when they came across the south side of the sheep, they said, "Here's a coyote right here in the sheep." So they swung around and killed it, and then they got the other one. That's what was goin' on right there.

(Smart.)

Yeah, they are.

0:28:58.1
(I think wolves, don't they hunt in packs? They try and tease an elk calf out, they cut it out or something, they work as a team.)

Yeah, they work as a team, chase 'em and cut some off, I think.

(You think there's any wolves in Colorado?)

I don't know at the present for certain, but I know there was last winter.

(The female that was killed?)

No, besides that one. There was that one, obviously. It wasn't last winter, it was the winter before, I guess. I found—Bruce Inness, one of the other guys here, he found the track. Actually, he didn't find the track. An outfitter found the track, called Bruce, Bruce went and looked at it and said, "I think that's a wolf, but I'm gonna call Larry and let's get a second opinion here." So I went up and looked at it, and it was obviously a wolf track. It was a wolf, and it was goin' back north, toward Wyoming. We never saw it, never heard from it, no damage here that we know of, but it was a wolf.

0:29:55.4
(That's gonna be a challenge if they move in here. They may not even start killing livestock, you never know. They stay away.)

I—I think they will kill livestock. Everywhere else that they've been around livestock, they have killed.

(It's easier than—?)

Yeah, it's so much easier than elk. [pause] It'll be somethin' else to do, I guess.

([laughs])

Since I don't have any livestock, I guess it's OK with me. [laughs]

([laughs] I guess it's whose ox is being gored!)

Exactly!

(I saw some in Yellowstone, and I was floored. They're just amazing. You had said that—I asked you about the most challenging. What's the best thing about your work?)

0:30:41.0
[pause] There's so many good things about my work, it's hard to pick what's best. I think probably overall just bein' able to do what you love to do and that's what you do for a living, what you love to do. And that involves hunting. I love to hunt, I grew up hunting. Hunting, horseback riding, bein' in the outdoors, the fresh air, the wind in the quaky trees, leaves, everything about it is great.

(It's spectacular, you're lucky. What's the worst—the things you like least about your work?)

Oh, probably the least thing is mostly in the spring, when all the ranchers are lambing, the ranchers here, we say they get into a "lambing frenzy." They're just—oh, they're goin' from daylight to dark or later, and they're stressed and wore out, and the coyotes are killin' their lambs, and oh, they're hard to deal with sometimes. You've got to really be careful how you deal with 'em. There's so much expected of a guy that there's a certain amount of stress on a trapper, too. They all expect you to work miracles with fewer tools than you had before to do it.

(There are dollar signs goin' around.)

Exactly.

(I've talked to a couple of ranchers who said it's like watchin' your kids' college fund go down the tubes. [chuckles])

Yeah. I sympathize with 'em, I understand. But you know, so far I get along really good with the ranchers I work for, and I pretty much just level with 'em. I tell 'em, "I'll do the best I can. My job is to see that you take as many lambs as possible to market. I want to keep you in business 'cause that'll keep me in business. I'm gonna do the best I can. But I can only do so much." They usually calm down and they're OK with it by the time we're through talkin'. [laughs]

([laughs] You've talked a lot about the sheep out here. I've seen sheep while I was driving up. What about cattle? Do a lot of people raise cattle or anything else?)

0:33:01.0
A lot of cattle in this country, there sure are. But the cattlemen here don't participate in our program. There's a very few that do. Some of those, actually one of the better ones, passed away, and his son took over the operation, and he doesn't think they need any predator control. But coyotes will definitely kill baby calves. I've seen it many, many times. And so often some of the big ranches maybe don't know that that's what happened to the calf, it's just a dry cow, there wasn't no calf. But [pause] they don't—I guess they don't want to turn loose the money for predator control, maybe they don't feel like it's profitable.

(Do they have to pay for guys to go in?)

Yeah. The way we're set up here, the Moffat County Woolgrowers Association, right now they're paying about—I think they're paying 52% or 53% of the cost of this program here, the federal 47% or 48%. So they're payin' over half the cost of the program. They assess themselves a head tax, which is close to three bucks now. That covers three field men and the airplane work. They put in usually about $20,000 in the airplane and the federal government matches the 20.

(I didn't know how it works.)

Yeah. So that's a—which brings up another point that has not so much in the last few years been a problem, but for most of my career, I've worked in similar situations, where either the woolgrowers associations or the counties pay half of your salary. It seemed every year I didn't know for sure if I'd have a job next year or not.

(I've heard that from other states, other people, too, that you never know what's gonna happen and you go from year to year or even month to month sometimes. It's stressful.)

Well, where I was at Mancos, they were without a program shortly after I left. They'd had one for a period of time, and then they—just not enough livestock people to be influential with the county and pay a head tax. Where I am right here now, in Craig, I think there's probably more sheep in northwest Colorado than anywhere else in the state.

(I saw a lot of them.)

0:35:39.0
So it's a little more secure now, but anything could happen, I suppose. I don't worry so much about that now, I'm close enough to—I could retire if I wanted now. But it's been a problem when I was younger. You've got a family, and it's a concern for a guy. I wish there was somethin' to be done about that for the young guys in this outfit. But you just never know for sure.

(And you're in an agency that depends so much on getting funds in from the outside. We don't charge, like, PPQ, Plant Protection Quarantine, has all these fees and Veterinary Services, they can charge fees, and they always seem to have a lot of money coming in. When we first went into Agriculture from Interior, it seemed like we were the stepchildren of USDA, it seemed that way for a long time. Did you ever find yourself in a political situation or where somebody like an environmental group or animal rights people challenged you?)

No, I never did. That was one of the things that I mentioned.

(That's good.)

No, I've never had a problem like that. Maybe I've been lucky.

([laughs] Do you go to the state fairs? Because some people go to state fairs and have booths.)

No, I haven't been.

(Because you might run into them there. [chuckles])

Absolutely. But no, I haven't. I've not had any problems like that at all.

(That's amazing. You're probably the only one I've talked to so far that hasn't had his traps destroyed or somebody come and get in his face.)

No, I never have. I guess—northwest Colorado is pretty much pro-livestock and fewer, I think, animal rights-type people. I hesitate to use that, even, because I'm all for animal rights.

(Yeah, it's that word. It's like, people who are—I don't know, I think of myself and other people just as conservationists. I think we are. But animal rights people to me are the ones that put the animals first before—)

Exactly. We don't have a lot of that goin' on right here in this part of Colorado. In my earlier years, in Mancos and Oklahoma, there wasn't much of it goin' on anywhere back then. It's a more recent years' development. So yeah, I've been lucky that way, I guess.

(Definitely. Have you ever done any endangered species work?)

0:38:27.0
Well, on the black-footed ferret, we had that project for I'm thinkin' five or six years in a row, where we would go down and take 20 coyotes out and they did blood tests on the coyotes to determine what diseases they might have, plague in particular. We did that for several years. One time I was called down, they had a bobcat that was getting into their pens and killin' the ferrets inside there. I went down with a big cage trap and caught the bobcat. Now they don't—they've discontinued—they've got the ferrets released now, and we're not monitoring the blood samples on coyotes now.

(I don't know how they're doing.)

I don't think they're doing very well.

(You just get one batch of bad—is it distemper that's so dangerous for them, they get sick from it and die?)

Distemper and plague both, yeah. Well, I don't know if a ferret dies from plague. Plague kills the prairie dogs and they have no food, actually. But they want to monitor all that stuff. But distemper probably is the main thing for the ferret itself.

(And they're getting that from domestic dogs. Have you had problems with domestic dogs, feral dogs and cats out here?)

Not so much here. I did when I was at Mancos, there was a couple of farm flocks that I worked on that were near the edge of town, and there were a lot of dog problems there. But there again, that was long enough ago that it wasn't a problem.

(Right, if a dog goes across somebody's land—?)

Right, and the sheriff backed me up on that, anything that needed to be done, you just did it, took care of it. You don't allow a neighbor's dog to kill livestock. So it never was a problem, but yeah, there were domestic dog problems. Here, there's not so much.

(I guess they don't run loose. What was the scariest thing that ever happened to you when you were out working?)

0:40:33.7
[laughs]

([laughs])

Well, probably the scariest thing was in Oklahoma when I was usin' M44's. I had one fire right in my face.

(You're lucky you're alive!)

I couldn't see. I was out in a field, and there was a lot of—they've got what we call Johnson grass, it was a real tall grass, and a little road was beat down that you drove on, but the grass was high on both sides. I'd set this thing and—back then I set 'em sort of hair-triggered, I thought that was the way to do it. I had had it all completely set and everything, and that Johnson grass, some of that has a real hard stem, it's a real stemmy-type grass, and there was some of that dead, and I had pushed that up around it to sort of camouflage where I had disturbed the dirt and what have you. I needed a little bit more, and I put my hand down near the M44 and reached across over here to get some stuff, and I guess when I did I put it down on a stem of that Johnson grass that was under the edge of the M44 when I put it down and it caused the other end to come up.

That's the only thing I can figure out that happened, because it happened just as I reached over, and pow! right in my face. Both eyes. And I had some water in my truck in a canteen. I washed my eyes out as best I could right there, but I couldn't see. If I squinted my eyes really hard and then opened 'em up, I could see for about a second and a half and it would just go away. But I jumped in the truck and I headed back, but doin' that to try to see and partly drivin' by sound, when I heard too much grass on the left

([laughs])

I'd go to the right a little more, you know, through the grass, and I drove—pulled right up to the guy's yard, the rancher I was workin' for, and fortunately he was at home. I went in and washed my eyes some more in the sink, and then he drove me to the hospital. I called—there we had a lot better radio communication than we do here. I was able to talk on my radio to the state office and told 'em what had happened while he was drivin' me to the hospital. They called the hospital and had 'em all prepared for me as soon as I got there. They put the deals in my eyes and flushed with water for so many hours and all that. It damaged my eyes, I forget now the degree of burn that they called it, it damaged 'em some, but eyes are amazing. They heal, you know? And they're fine now. For several years, dust and wind really bothered my eyes.

0:43:11.6
(I was told that eyes are the fastest-healing organ of the body.)

I believe that.

(They'll immediately start recovering from an injury.)

I believe that. They certainly did.

(You're lucky you didn't get any in your mouth or anything.)

Not that I know of.

(Or the dose may not have been…)

Most of it hit in my eyes, seemed like. Of course, you just immediately start runnin' back, you're doin' this. I washed my eyes, washed my mouth out with water as well. It lowered the oxygen in my blood. They did a blood test. That's how it kills an animal. It lowered the oxygen in my blood some, but they said that fortunately since I wasn't a smoker, I had better oxygen-carrying capacity. So it really wasn't a great danger to me.

(That's scary. Do you remember what the funniest thing was or a funny story?)

0:44:11.5
Sue and I were talking about that. I can't really think of anything dealing with the animals or wildlife that was actually funny. [laughs]

([laughs] It was scary at the time and later on you would think of it as funny? [laughs])

[laughs] Yeah, but no, I can't think of anything that was actually very funny.

(Well, ok, ou're probably lucky you didn't get blown away out there by the M44. Did you ever modify the traps that you used? When you were still able to trap, did you have a favorite trap?)

My favorite trap was the Victor 3N, and still is, but we don't use 'em now.

([chuckles])

The only modifications I made was just adjustments to it so that when you set it the pan's flat. When they come out of the box, sometimes it's rared up, but just an adjustment on that. And then of course I would boil 'em, wax 'em, do all that. I really liked the 3N because when you set it, it's a very stable trap. I'd use always a stake instead of a drag. You put the stake up where you want the one loose jaw to set on, and then when you set it, it's like a three-point hook-up sort of a thing. The loose jaw's on the top of the stake at the right level. If it's not right, raise the jaw and tap it a little bit more, set it down, and you get it all level, and then the two springs, they stabilize everything. A coyote can step on the jaw or a springs and the trap doesn't move. It's

good and stable. The coil springs that we've got now, you can make 'em stable, but it's a lot more difficult. You've got to find little rocks or—

(—tinker around with them a little bit?)

0:45:53.7
Yeah. Get somethin' under all four corners and under the ears on the springs. That's about the biggest problem to me for trapping, is if a coyote steps on the jaw or the spring, the ears on the coil spring thing, and it causes the other side of the trap to raise just a little, the dirt moves right there. The coyote steps back and looks at that and then they'll start digging and dig your trap up, and then they're a lot smarter.

(That's what it seems like. Once they see a trap, they're—you're not gonna catch 'em.)

Yeah, they're pretty wise.

(When you were doing trapping, did you use lures at all? Did you set them on a path where you knew they were gonna go through?)

No, mostly either—nearly always coyote urine and occasionally with that various kinds of lures, probably the most—I guess my favorite lure that I used was a commercial lure, Carmen's Pro's Choice.

(That pulled my dog in.)

Yeah, it's a good lure.

(So you didn't make any smelly stuff?)

Oh, I did, I made a lot, a lot of bait, M44 bait. But I had a pretty good M44 bait that I made the last year that—I was in Colorado before I went to Oklahoma, and DeLyle Rowley was my supervisor then, and it was his recipe, and I don't—I looked for it the other day and I can't find it. I don't know—'cause I haven't made any bait in so many years, but it worked pretty good in Colorado, as good as anything else worked in Colorado. But when I went to Oklahoma, it worked great down there. And maybe that's one reason I got so many coyotes, I don't know, but all the guys down there were wantin' bait recipes. I gave it to 'em. I don't know what they did with it.

0:47:54.0
(Did you ever have to deal with feral hogs? Did you have any there?)

No. Where I was in western Oklahoma, there weren't any there.

(Because that's starting to—)

Yeah, from what I read, that's startin' to be a problem.

(Were there any trappers that you learned from that you can remember, anybody that you worked with that you thought was a really good trapper?)

Well, DeLyle Rowley was my supervisor, I probably learned more from him than anyone else. And it wasn't so much about trapping, setting a trap per se, because I had self-taught myself that and been a fur trapper and all. But just about coyotes in general, about decoy dog use. He taught me a lot about decoy dog use, just dealing with people, dealing with ranchers. He's a great guy. Are you gonna interview him as well?

(You know, I think he's on the list, but I think he was ill. We're trying to do it in phases. He's on the list, though.)

I know that email that Yeary sent me, he recommended Delisle.

(He's on there. I think I couldn't get hold of him or he was ill, but I'm not gonna give up. I've got this other gentleman in Florida that has prostate cancer, and he said to call him in six months and see how he feels. So I don't want to bother him until he contacts me.)

But Delisle, he's a really nice guy.

(There's a couple of names that keep coming up over and over again, that we keep hearing. How did your trapping techniques change over the years? Oh, and...go ahead and answer that. I keep forgetting to ask you about another question. [chuckles] Go ahead.)

0:49:44.5
When you say "trapping techniques," you're not talking about just specifically steel traps? Just how I do my job, how as it changed? Trap snares, M44's?

(Yeah. Have you changed the way you look at a problem, how you do things?)

Yeah, I have as a result of Amendment 14. [pause] My first thing that I do—well, you know, the first thing I do is make sure that it's a coyote that has killed this lamb, assess the situation and all that. But my first line of defense is not always a trap or a snare now, because that involves a 30-day exemption. Maybe you've already used that and it's over with, or you don't want to use that right now, because you know it's gonna be worse later. You've got to save that 30-day for when it's the most effective. So mostly now it's calling and decoy dog use.

(How do you use decoy dogs?)

A decoy dog, if you can locate where the coyotes are living, and you try to slip in—and I do this by howling. I howl, they answer me and I know about where they are, then I ride my horse around, get the wind in my favor and slip in, and I try to set up where I can see a little bit, which is somewhat difficult in that brushy country. I use a remote call, Fox Pro is the brand I use. I set my call out there at 100, 150 yards, and then I set on a high spot if I can, wherever I can see, and I play a howl, usually, first. That gets the coyote's attention, and if you're anywhere near where they're livin', they're probably gonna come and take a look, see what's goin' on here. And if that doesn't work, pup distress usually will get 'em to come in.

0:51:41.0
My decoy dog is out in front of me, runnin' around, checkin' stuff out, messin' around. When they come in where they can see, there's a dog. They don't want that dog near their den, near their territory. They will come to run him off. A good decoy dog is one that's tough enough to stay out there and mix it up with 'em for a little while. You want a—my old dog right now is one of the better dogs that I've had in 26 years of doin' this. It takes more than one coyote to make him come back. It takes at least two if they're tough, and three or more if they're not so tough. But I also have a Tritronics training collar that he wears. It has a button that makes a tone sound, and he's trained when he hears that tone to come back. So I can have him come back whenever I'm ready, but I like for him to stay out there until all the coyotes that are associated with that family unit are all together here and they're gonna work him over. Then I bring him back, or he on his own decides to come back…

([laughs])

If it's too rough. He comes right straight to me. Of course, I'm lookin' down the barrel of a shotgun. He comes right on in and what he usually does, and other good dogs that I've had as well, they will get in maybe 15, 20 yards from me and then they'll just peel off to the right or the left and stop.

(To get out of your way?)

To get out of your way. He knows what's gonna happen. He gets out of my way, and he'll stand there, and he looks at me, and he looks back at the coyotes.

([laughs])

He looks at me and he looks at the coyotes, waitin' for me to shoot so he can go shake 'em. That's his reward.

(You're kidding!)

Oh, he loves to shake the coyotes. He hates coyotes, see, that's what it's all about with him. Anyway, what that does, that allows me the opportunity to kill more coyotes at one time. Where if you didn't have a decoy dog and were just calling, a coyote would show up out there, and he'd kind of come in downwind of your call, he'd smell all that and he'd leave, if you didn't kill him first. You're only gonna get one, possibly two, if you're lucky. But with a dog, you can get 'em all gathered up, bring 'em in, put 'em in front of you, and then get all you can with a shotgun. I've killed as high as five a couple times with this dog bringin' 'em in.

(Smart dog!)

0:54:10.4
Four quite a few times, but usually two or three. [pause] Anyway, that's how you use—that's pretty much the way.

(My dog wouldn't do it. [laughs]

[laughs]

She's too much of a couch potato. Do any of your kids tarp and hunt with you?)

My son actually worked for Wildlife Services, ADC at that time, here in Colorado when there was—we used to have four positions, when I came here there was four. Prior to that there was five. When I came there was four. He came and worked for a year, but at that time I think the starting salary was so low, and he just needed to make more money. He was a heavy equipment operator, he could run any kind of machinery, and he could make almost twice as much money doin' somethin' else. He had to leave. He just had to go where the money was, so he did, and he did that for a few years, and now he's head of the Parks and Recreation Department in Craig. He's got a really nice job now.

(That's great! It sounds like fun, too!)

Yeah. You know, it's a lot of work, too, but it's a good job for him. He likes it.

(What about your grandkids?)

They're all too young, really, to do much right now. [pause] My son married a girl that had three children, and then he had two more with her, Misty and Mandy. They come out, one or the other of 'em, every Sunday, and sometimes both of 'em. And we ride horses and stuff. But as far as actually hunting or trapping with me, they don't. They go with their dad. They love to go with him deer hunting, from the vehicle, you drive around, see somethin', get out, slip up on it. And he takes his stepchildren. He's like a dad to them, too. They really love him. He takes them all hunting. He loves to hunts. He hunts—any excuse to hunt. He'll go with somebody else, even if he's not—just to be there, you know? So he does that, and they go with him. And then my daughter has two little bitty ones, and their dad hunts. But they're not old enough to go yet.

0:56:36.8
(Maybe in a while, maybe in a little while you can take 'em out. I remember goin' with my grandpa. It was a big deal for me to go out in a boat with him, especially. What do you think the wildlife damage management is gonna look like in 50 years? Do you think it's still gonna be around?)

You know, I thought about that. The direction it's goin' right now for the predator control part of our work, I think the airport work, the human health and safety stuff will just increase. I think that's—no one has a problem with that. But livestock protection, the direction it's goin' right now, we have a lot of opposition, and I don't see that it's improving. To me, it seems like it's gettin' a little worse. But if you're gonna look at 50 years out, it might bottom out and people might decide, "You know, we have to have some help here. We have to have this." In 50 years it might be pretty good again. It's hard to say.

(You do mainly livestock work. Do you do any urban work? I think that's where it's really increasing.)

I'm sure it is, but no, I don't. I'm only experienced—

(You've got enough on your plate here with this. But I know I've seen the problems with the urban, and people are moving into areas like this. Steamboat seems like it's building a lot in that area.)

It is.

(People moving in and they want to see wildlife until it's on their back step, and then everything changes.)

Yeah, urban work and then the human health and safety work of any kind—

(Do you do the wildlife disease work, with the avian influenza? Have you gotten dragged into that?)

No, I haven't, not the—nothing there. We did do some work for CWD, chronic wasting disease. One of the ranches near here is where—

(They had to put all the—that's right.)

Motherwell Ranch, where they—

(They had to destroy that herd.)

Yeah.

(Lynn Creekmore told me about that. She was the veterinarian that was in an office in our building for a while. She had to come down and do part of that. She said it was awful.)

Yeah. We worked in that for—we killed deer and elk both in a five-mile radius around that ranch. I don't remember now how many they got, but it was a lot.

(I think it was over 200.)

0:59:02.4
Yeah, it was, a little over 200, I think. [pause] And I didn't feel good about doin' that. It just seemed—it just didn't seem right, you know? [chuckles] But on the other hand, it had to be done. I didn't have nightmares over it or anything.

(It did seem like a waste.)

A waste, that was my thinking more than anything else. But you know, maybe it stopped the spread of that—maybe it would be much worse now if we hadn't done that. You never know. It's one of those things you never know about.

(Kind of like making a big incision and cutting out a bad area to keep the tissue around it.)

Exactly.

(What do you think are the biggest challenges facing you and your colleagues in your work?)

0:59:49.7
[sighs] Well, probably [laughs] to maintain funding of some kind.

([laughs])

Although I'm not directly involved in that. That's what's gonna end it for me, is a lack of funding. We're being bombarded from so many fronts to try to stop the funding, and they even a few years ago tried to—they wanted to surgically remove $10,000 from Wildlife Services that deal with the actual killing of predators. Go ahead, keep your airport work and your, your white hat jobs, but take that out.

(I think it was one Congressman, isn't it? Every year he brings it out.)

Yeah, every year he tries something. I don't know how much [pause] the general public is—maybe they're seein' it for what it really is, or maybe they're leaning his direction. I don't know how that's going. One thing that I have a little bit of a disagreement with, I suppose, is the way things seem to be going. If you—you know, 20 years ago, it seemed like almost everyone knew that there was government trappers. They hunt coyotes. They kill bear and coyotes and lions that kill livestock. Everyone knew we existed, you know? Well, it seems that we're tryin' to avoid anything in the media, we're trying to lay low and not be seen and I bet you right now, if you had some way of doin' a survey and comparing, I bet there's not near as many people that even know that there is such a thing called Wildlife Services.

1:01:41.2
I know on 9/11, after that happened, Dave Moreno, my supervisor, [banging/pounding noises in the background] was telling me that there were people in Washington that said, "You mean we have government employees flying around in airplanes with guns?"

([laughs])

"How can that be?" You know? They didn't even know that we existed. So I don't know whether that's a good thing or not. To me it's not so good. I think we would be better off to take our lumps now and be known. This is what we're doin'. We're doin' a service here.

(I think they've tried so hard to avoid the negative process that they retreat, they've retreated.)

That's what I see, I see a retreating there. They're avoiding all press at all costs. And I think we need to stand up to some of that, get the information out there. I think an intelligent person, if he's presented with both sides of this, I think he'll understand and think, "You know, that is needed."

(That's what I try to do in my job. I'm the librarian, so I push as much information out as I can.)

Right.

(I get phone calls from the public, a lot of phone calls, requesting information.)

Oh, I bet you do, in research.

(So they—I think people are desperately wanting answers and help. It's just that you try and—you're so busy with all your regular day-to-day stuff, to have to put that on top of you is hard, to go out and do a PR campaign, too.)

Yeah.

1:03:12.7
(I agree with you, I see that, too.)

And as far as the time I would have to do something like that, I don't have the time. The way we work here, with our maxi-flex system on our time, I put in a lot of hours in the spring and summer, and I usually accumulate some years close to 200 hours of comp time, always over 100 hours of comp, 150 to 200 hours of comp, in order to try to get the job done and then I take that time off later. Right now I've got a project goin' on in my house here, you know. Hunting season's goin' on, there's not a lot I can do anyway, and the lambs are gone to market. So it's a good time to use it. But when you're putting in that much extra time, when would you have time for other things?

(It's hard, because I know some of the specialists will go to fairs and something like that, and that takes up a lot of time, to put together a booth, get the information, and do that. When we did the Western Stock Show, I've gone down there a couple of times and volunteered, and it takes a lot. But it really is a good impact to talk to the public and actually talk to someone one-on-one. Or go to schools. Once you retire, you can go to some schools and talk with the kids about it.)

[laughs]

(Did you ever do any bird work? Do you do any bird work at all?)

I don't here at all. I did in Oklahoma some when I was there. There was—I did some pigeon work one time.

(That's the "flying rats"?)

The flying rats, yeah.

([laughs])

I did a little bit of that. Oh, I had a call, too, for those Mississippi kites down there, are you familiar with those?

(I know the kites are a problem, yeah.)

The problem was, they were attacking people.

(Oh, gosh!)

[chuckles] Wherever they're nesting, they don't want anybody coming—if you're just walkin' down the sidewalk—it's in town.

(Yeah, they're territorial.)

Oh, yeah, they would dive and occasionally knock your hat off, things like that. But mostly all we did there was take the baby birds out of the nest. There was a place there that would take 'em and finish raisin' 'em, turn 'em loose.

(Jeeze)

Yeah.

(Have you had problems with eagles coming down and taking lambs?)

Yeah, every year there's quite a few lambs killed by eagles.

1:05:42.8
(I didn't realize that until a couple of years ago.)

Yeah. Some places it's a really bad problem, but there's just nothin' we can do about it. You can try to do somethin' about it if you'd like, but you'll get such a runaround from U.S. Fish and Wildlife, you won't accomplish anything.

(They're protected.)

The rancher pretty well understands and agrees. "Take your losses on the eagles. Go kill the coyotes. Do somethin' that you can do somethin' about."

(I'm at the very end here. Do you have any other hobbies or interests? I know you like to hunt. Anything else?)

Well [pause] at the present time, I like to ride horses, but that's sort of on the job as well. I spend a lot of time with my grandchildren.

([chuckles])

I love doin' that. In years past, I've done other things. Some of the pictures on the wall I painted. I used to paint some. But never good enough to make a living at it. I enjoy painting.

(When you took your family up in the summertime, what did you-all do? You pretty much were working the entire time. Did they keep a camp for you?)

Yeah, they stayed at camp. The kids played. We had a pony at that time, too. They rode the pony. I would go to work in the morning and come back in the evening.

(Did your wife field calls for you from ranchers when she was home?)

When she was home, oh, yeah, all the time, and still does. Yeah.

(I've heard that from other wives. It's kind of interesting that they're like a business team. A lot of them do the MIS work.)

She doesn't do that, the MIS, but she does—if she's not with me at camp, I usually try to call home every evening so that she'll know I'm OK. She'll tell me who called and what their losses were and what-all they said. Very important, to have somebody to convey that information.

(Can you think of anything else? I went through all my questions.)

[laughs] Did you?

(You said you didn't think you had anything to say. You did!)

I can't think of anything else right now, I really can't. [pause] It's a great job.

(Have you ever want to get into the administrative end, state director? Does that not appeal to you?)

I don't have the education. I've got one year of college. I would—at some point closer to retirement, I wouldn't mind bein' assistant district supervisor, somethin' like that, to get my salary a little higher before retirement, you know?

([laughs])

As far as the job, I've got the best job in Wildlife Services right now. I wouldn't want to trade my saddle for a desk, no.

(It's beautiful out here, gorgeous. You've got a big smile on your face every time you talk about your work.)

[laughs]

([laughs] I can tell you enjoy it.)

I do. It's been great. And still is. I hope that I can do it for a great number of years. One day Mike Yeary and David were here doing the property inventory thing, just asked me, "Do you have any idea when you're gonna retire? What's your plans?" I told 'em, "As long as I can still throw a saddle on my horse, I'm gonna keep workin'."

([laughs] You might as well. It's something to keep busy.)

If I get to where I can't physically do the job, I'm not gonna be a burden to this Woolgrowers Association or Wildlife Services, either. I'll go ahead and retire. But as long as I can do the job, I think I'll keep on doin' it.

(You might want to get into a position where you could be a teacher, too, or a mentor to some younger guy who's comin' in, do that for a time, just to keep your hand in.)

Yeah, I could do that. There's a lot of things that—Bruce and I are the two oldest guys here in northwest Colorado. I think I'm the oldest one in the state.

(You're not old! You're five years old than I am, that's not old! [laughs])

[laughs]

(That's not old!)

But I think I'm the oldest field man in the state. We've had a lot of problems with this third position here gettin' somebody that will come and can do the work, can take the stress, and stay. Most don't. They leave.

(Is it a combination of a lower salary—or is it just that it's too much, too demanding?)

I think it's a combination. If it paid enough, a guy would put up with a lot more.

(It's hard on families, too.)

It's hard on families. It doesn't pay, the starting salary is not enough. The top end salary is not enough, either. I would like to see that—but especially for the new guys, you need a starting salary that will attract qualified people and then keep 'em here. And then the stress of the job during the lambing frenzy, that's pretty tough for a young guy to take. Bruce said it one day, and I agreed with him after I thought about it, there's a—he said, "It makes a lot of difference whether you're comin' or goin' in this outfit." If you're a new guy comin' here, you've got to try to make an impression, and you don't know how well you'll do, what's excepted of you. There's so much BS to put up with, a young guy a lot of times just checks it in. He'll make as much money or more doin' something else and they'll leave. Where older guys like Bruce and myself, we don't put up with the BS so much. We don't have to.

(Right. That's the thing. I've been around long enough, it's kinda like, I'll just walk away from it.)

That's what makes it tough on a young guy, I think, the combination of those things.

1:11:37.0
(What do you think would be the good characteristics of somebody coming in to a job? Would you recommend to—I know your son worked for us, but a new guy that came in and asked you, "I'm thinking about taking this job," what kind of qualifications do you think they would need?)

You know, I think one of the more important qualifications would be, you have to be self-motivated. I've seen a lot of guys that can do a pretty good job, but somebody needed to tell 'em where to go every morning. You have to be very self-motivated, able to schedule your own time, do the most good where you can. I don't know how you advise somebody to deal with stress.

There's all kinds of information on that, but it doesn't seem to work [chuckles] not during the lambing frenzy.

([chuckles])

I think a guy needs to love to hunt above all else. There's a lot of guys that like to hunt coyotes some, but their main hunt, the main thing they want to do is hunt deer and elk. Or they'd like to hunt coyotes, but they really like to fish, whatever else they might do. They're not gonna do as well. You've got to have a guy that would rather hunt coyotes, or particularly hunt of some kind, above all else. I've quit jobs in the past because it was too time-consuming, I didn't have time to hunt as much as I wanted. My wife could tell you all kinds of stories, I'm glad she's not in here. [laughs]

([laughs])

I think a real desire to hunt.

(I don't have any more questions. I've enjoyed talking to you. Can you think of anything else?)

I can't think of a thing.

(I appreciate it. It was a great interview.)

I've enjoyed the visit.

1:13:24.5 End.